
June 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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- [Seeking Nominations for USDA Advisory Committees](#)
- [New Improvement to Streamline Crop Reporting](#)
- [Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers](#)
- [Maintaining Good Credit History](#)
- [Emergency Disaster Declarations and Designations](#)

Tennessee FSA Newsletter

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Seeking Nominations for USDA Advisory Committees

Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers and the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers

The USDA Secretary of Agriculture is soliciting nominations for membership for the Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers and the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers.

The **Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers** advises the Secretary of Agriculture on matters broadly affecting new farmers and ranchers including strategies, policies, and programs that will enhance opportunities and create new farming and ranching operations. The **deadline for applications is June 15, 2017.**

For additional information about the Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, please visit <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/05/31/2017->

William Lyons
Jack Whittenburg

[11214/advisory-committee-on-beginning-farmers-and-ranchers-acbfr-request-for-nominations](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/06/01/2017-11214/advisory-committee-on-beginning-farmers-and-ranchers-acbfr-request-for-nominations).

To find contact information for your local office go to www.fsa.usda.gov/tn

The **Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers** works in the interest of the public to ensure socially disadvantaged farmers have equal access to USDA programs. The **deadline to apply is June 16, 2017**.

For additional information about the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers, please visit <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/06/01/2017-11216/advisory-committee-on-minority-farmers-request-for-nominations>.

Prior applicants under the previous solicitations are not required to reapply. An organization may nominate individuals from within or outside its membership. Alternatively, an individual may nominate herself or himself. Nomination packages should include a nomination form along with a cover letter or resume that documents the nominee's background and experience. Nomination forms are available on the Internet at <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-755>.

Deadlines for other agency advisory boards:

- [Nomination Deadline: June 30, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominations for National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee](#)
- [Nomination Deadline: June 30, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominees for the National Watermelon Promotion Board](#)
- [Nomination Deadline: July 1, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominees for the U.S. Potato Board](#)
- [Nomination Deadline: July 14, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominees for American Egg Board](#)
- [Nomination Deadline: August 7, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominees for National Organic Standards Board \(NOSB\)](#)

New Improvement to Streamline Crop Reporting

Update Lets Farmers and Ranchers Report Common Acreage Information Once

Farmers and ranchers filing crop acreage reports with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and participating insurance providers approved by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) now can provide the common information from their acreage reports at one office and the information will be electronically shared with the other location.

This new process is part of the USDA Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI). This interagency collaboration also includes participating private crop insurance agents and insurance

companies, all working to streamline the information collected from farmers and ranchers who participate in USDA programs.

Once filing at one location, data that's important to both FSA and RMA will be securely and electronically shared with the other location avoiding redundant and duplicative reporting, as well as saving farmers and ranchers time.

USDA has been working to streamline the crop reporting process for agricultural producers, who have expressed concerns with providing the same basic common information for multiple locations. In 2013, USDA consolidated the deadlines to 15 dates for submitting these reports, down from the previous 54 dates at RMA and 17 dates for FSA. USDA representatives believe farmers and ranchers will experience a notable improvement in the coming weeks as they approach the peak season for crop reporting later this summer.

More than 93 percent of all annual reported acres to FSA and RMA now are eligible for the common data reporting, and USDA is exploring adding more crops. Producers must still visit both locations to validate and sign acreage reports, complete maps or provide program-specific information. The common data from the first-filed acreage report will now be available to pre-populate and accelerate completion of the second report. Plans are underway at USDA to continue building upon the framework with additional efficiencies at a future date.

Farmers and ranchers are also reminded that they can now access their FSA farm information from the convenience of their home computer. Producers can see field boundaries, images of the farm, conservation status, operator and owner information and much more.

The new customer self-service portal, known as **FSAFarm+**, gives farmers and ranchers online access to securely view, print or export their personal farm data. To enroll in the online service, producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for details. To find a local FSA office in your area, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating purposes and/or to purchase or improve farms or ranches. While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for underserved applicants. An underserved applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities. For purposes of this program, underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders. If producers or their spouses believe they would qualify as underserved, they should contact their local FSA office for details. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs require that applicants have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow.

Information found on a customer's credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score.

- Make sure to pay bills on time. Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt.
- Keep your credit card balances low.
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts.

FSA's farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Emergency Disaster Declarations and Designations

Farmers and ranchers know all too well that natural disasters can be a common, and likely a costly, variable to their operation. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has emergency assistance programs to provide assistance when disasters strike, and for some of those programs, a disaster designation may be the eligibility trigger. When natural disaster occurs, there is a process for requesting a USDA Secretarial disaster designation for a county. Agricultural producers can play a vital role in this process.

If you have experienced a production loss as a result of a natural disaster you may submit a request to your local FSA county office for your county to be evaluated for a Secretarial disaster designation. Once a request is received, the county office will collect disaster data and create a Loss Assessment Report. The County Emergency Board will review the Loss Assessment Report and determine if a recommendation is sent forward to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for the designation.

For more information on FSA disaster programs and disaster designations, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).





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